

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8340

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6341

FOR SCI

DEPARTMENT PASS NAS AND NASA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TGEN UR

SUBJ: SOVIET ACADEMY'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

REF: A. MOSCOW 5668; B. STATE 85927; C. STATE 80385

D. STATE 78907

1. SOVIET ACADEMY OF SCIENCES HAS POSTPONED 250TH ANNIVERSARY JUBILEE CELEBRATION. DURING VISIT TO INTERKOSMOS ON OTHER MATTERS, SCI COUNSELOR WAS HANDED COPY OF TELEGRAM THAT ACADEMY WAS SENDING TO ALL INVITEES TO CELEBRATION. WHEN ASKED ABOUT PROBABLE DURATION OF POSTPONEMENT, INTERKOSMOS OFFICIALS REPLIED THAT CELEBRATION WOULD MOST LIKELY NOT BE RESCHEDULED BEFORE FALL THIS YEAR. LATER CALL TO KORNEYEV, CHIEF OF ACADEMY'S FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT, CONFIRMED POSTPONEMENT, BUT KORNEYEV "FEARED" TO SPECULATE ON LENGTH OF POSTPONEMENT.

2. TEXT OF CABLE SENT TO INVITEES IS AS FOLLOWS:
BEGIN TEST: "THE USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES REPORTS THAT THE JUBILEE SESSION OF THE ACADEMY SCHEDULED
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FOR MAY 14, 1974, AND MARKING THE 250TH

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACADEMY IS BEING POSTPONED BECAUSE OF PREPARATIONS FOR HILDING ELECTIONS TO THE USSR SUPREME SOVIET. WE SHALL LATER INFORM (YOU) ABOUT A NEW DATE FOR CONDUCTING THIS SESSION. WE BEG FORGIVENESS FOR ANY DISRUPTION OF YOUR PLANS. SINCERELY, SKRYABIN, CHIEF SCIENTIFIC SECRETARY, PRESIDUM, SOVIET ACADEMY." END TEXT.

3. COMMENT: CITING PREPARATIONS FOR SUPREME SOVIET ELECTIONS AS REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT OF ACADEMY OF CELEBRATIONS BARELY TWO WEEKS BEFORE SCHEDULED ARRIVAL OF HIGH-LEVEL GUESTS APPEARS TO US SO WEAK AN EXCUSE AT TO BE ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE. (THIS MORNING ACADEMY BUILDINGS WERE STILL BEING PAINTED AND FLOWERS BEING PLANGED IN PREPARATION FOR JUBILEE.) SUPREME SOVIET ELECTIONS ARE NOT SCHEDULED UNTIL JUNE 16, AND PREPARATIONS FOR THEM HAVE BEEN IN PROGRESS NOW FOR SOME TIME.

4. UNTIL MORE INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE, MOST PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR THIS LAST-MINUTE POSTPONEMENT SEEMS TO BE THAT PRESIDENT KELDYSH MIGHT HAVE SUFFERED SERIOUS RELAPSE IN HIS HEALTH. AS WAS NOTED IN REF. D, DURING AMBASSADOR'S MARCH 18 CALL ON HIM, KELDYSH SEEMED VERY TIRED AND WEAK.

5. EMBASSY ASSUMES THAT ALL RELATED PLANS SUCH AS STEVER-KIRULLIN TALKS (REF D) AND WALD CONSULTATIONS (REF. C) ARE CANCELLED.
DUBS

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